

LP&R

Two networks, many research issues and the birth of COST
Action 'Parental Leave Policies & Social Sustainability'

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Part 1:
Evolution of an international learning community

1982-1990: birth of a network

- 1982-85: EEC 1st Equal Opportunities Programme: ‘*to extend parental leave and leave for family reasons and...build up network of public (childcare) facilities and services*’ → proposal for **Parental Leave Directive (12/1983)**...not adopted because of UK veto👉
- 1986-1990: 2nd Equal Opportunities Programme → **Network on Childcare** - expert from each MS (12) + Coordinator (PM)
- 1988: ***Childcare and Equality of Opportunity*** - 1st of 3 Network reviews of services for young children + chapter on ‘Employment Policies’ that reviews ‘Maternity and parental leave’ & ‘other adaptations to assist parents when working’
- 1990: ***Childcare in the European Community 1985-1990*** – 2nd Network review

1991-1996: the 'Childcare Network' evolves

- 1991-1995: 3rd Equal Opportunities Programme → extension of Network on **Childcare and other Measures to reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities** (FD joins for BE Flanders😊)
- Network remit = 1) **services for young children** (0-10); 2) **leave for parents**; 3) **men as carers**
- 1994: *Leave Arrangements for Workers with Children* - 'the first time the [network] has focused exclusively and in detail on leave' ... 16 countries incl. Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden

1991-1996: The 'Childcare Network' evolves

Conclusions from leave review included:

- need for regular **monitoring and research**
- leave needs to be **flexible** to encourage use by women and men, including **responding to diversity** in family and employment circumstances
- **conditions** needed '*if leave arrangements to be used by a significant number of men*', e.g. payment, non-transferability, flexibility
- **entitlement** to 4 types of leave (Maternity, Paternity, Parental, Family Reasons)
- consider moving from focus on early parenthood → **life course approach**

1991-1996: The 'Childcare Network' evolves...and ends

- 1995: *A Review of services for Young Children in the European Union 1990-1995* - 3rd Network review of services and parenting leave
- 1996: EU adopts PL Directive (UK opt out)...EC Network ends
- 10 years of studies, seminars and workshops, reports + a video... including much work on '**Men as Carers**':
 - Men as workers in services for young children...propose short-term target of 20%
 - Analysis of newspaper coverage of men as carers, especially fathers
 - Fathers' employment
 - International seminar and report on 'men as carers', including fathers and childcare services; men in childcare services; the workplace; and leave policies

1996-2004: from European 'Childcare Network' to 'International Leave Network'

- Two follow-ups to Childcare Network
 - '*Children in Europe*': multi-national and multi-lingual magazine
 - Continuing interest in leave policies
- 1999: Brussels **seminar on Parental leave** (FD@CBGS & PM@TCRU)... 19 researchers give papers on leave policies in 7 countries and thematic papers, e.g. 'Cash-for-Care and daddy leave' from Norway
- Edited book published *Parental Leave: Progress or Pitfall? Research and Policy Issues in Europe*... Foreword by Sheila Kamerman

1996-2005: from European 'Childcare Network' to 'International Leave Network'

- 2002: FD & PM co-edit special issue of *Community, Work and Family* on parental leave
- 2004: 2nd Brussels **seminar** → establishment of leave network
- 2005:
 - 29 members from 20 countries – Europe + Australia, Canada, Iceland, USA
 - 1st **annual review** of leave policies...19 countries
 - 1st **annual seminar** (in London)

NB. All reviews and seminar PPT presentations in network archive

2005 - : the Leave Network evolves

- Minimal organisation and structure (coordinators/coordinating group + types of membership + technical help)...no funding...

...but the **Leave Network has thrived and expanded**

- 121 members (honorary, full, associate, affiliate) and 48 countries...from European to global spread -- though still large gaps in coverage

2005 - : the Leave Network evolves

- Expansion of activities:
 - **Annual review**: now online and covering 50 countries in 2023...downloaded 4000x in 2021 from
 - **Website** (www.leavenetwork.org)
 - **Annual seminar**: hosted by members including 2x in North America
 - **Collaborations** → books, special issues, articles, exchanges etc. & *COSTAction (CA21150) Parental leave Policies & Social Sustainability*

Part 2:
Emerging research issues

Progress or Pitfall ?

- Following 1999 Brussels seminar, the question posed in our book (*Parental Leave: Progress or Pitfall?*) continues to hang over the whole field
- Too many leave policies designed, in effect, to reproduce maternalist presumptions at the expense of
 - Employment opportunities for women
 - Caring responsibilities and opportunities for men
- Should leave policies be gendered? Increasingly questioned in terminology, e.g. New Zealand, Portugal (cf. *CostAction WG4*) and design, e.g. Iceland

Emerging Issues: Diversities and Inequalities

- In subsequent meetings and publications, other issues have emerged
 - Understanding the relationship between **diverse forms of family life and employment** and leave policy...in particular the consequences of such diversities for accessing and using leave, identifying **inequalities** and **exclusions** (cf. *COSTAction WG2*)
 - Beyond leave as a conditional employment benefit to leave as a **universal social / citizenship right**?

Emerging Issues: Conditions and care receivers

- **What conditions** promote take-up? Why are well-designed policies associated with high take-up by men in some countries but not in others?
 - **Design** matters...but so do
 - **Workplace** practices and wider **cultural norms**, incl. gender and inter-generational relations
- **Care-receivers**
 - **effects** of leave on them (*cf. CostAction WG3*)...but also
 - their **perspectives**...how to get the perspectives of care-recipients, whether children or adults

Emerging Issues: Employment, Care and Gender

- Develop work on the relationship between **employment, care and gender**, e.g.
 - the relationship between fathers' taking leave and their **post-leave sharing of family responsibilities**
 - **men's participation in care work** across various settings...fathers in the home & men working in children's and other services

Emerging Issues: Leave policies in a broader framework

- Examining leave policies and their workings within a **broader framework of care-work policies and cultural ideas** with respect to care tasks, e.g. gap between the end of well-paid leave and the start of entitlement to ECEC services (cf. LP&R Annual Reviews)

Emerging Issues: A Life Course Perspective

- Beyond parental leave to research **other forms of leave spanning life course**, e.g. carer's leave for workers with responsibilities for older children, for adults with disabilities, for adults with chronic illnesses...time credits
- How might life-course leave system relate to **other proposals for new universal entitlements** (e.g. *universal basic income, universal basic services*)

Emerging Issues: Beyond the Global North

- Need for more research on leave policies in **medium- and lower-income countries**

Last but not Least

- We need a better understanding of how leave policies can contribute to broader societal goals
 - Increasing **equality** and **security**
 - Strengthening **democracy** and **solidarity**
 - Building respect for **diversity** and **sustainable** ways of life

cf. COSTAction aim “to advance and disseminate research and knowledge about the significance of paid parental leave for the social sustainability of societies”

Selected Publications

- Deven, F. and P. Moss (2022) 'A short history of leave policies research in higher income countries', in I. Dobrotic, S. Blum and A. Koslowski (Eds.) *Research Handbook on Leave Policy*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 14-27.
- Moss, P. and Deven, F. (2020) 'Leave policies in Europe: current policies, future directions', *International Journal of Sociology & Social Policy*, 40 (5/6). 429-440
- Merla, L. and Deven F. (2019) 'The time credit system: the panacea for a life course approach?', in P. Moss, A-Z. Duvander and A. Koslowski (Eds.) *Parental Leave and Beyond: Recent International Developments, Current Issues and Future Directions*. Bristol: Policy Press, 299-313.
- Moss, P., Duvander A.-Z. and Koslowski, A. (Eds.) *Parental Leave and Beyond: Recent International Developments, Current Issues and Future Directions*. Bristol: Policy Press
- Moss, P. and Deven, F. (2015) 'Leave Policies in challenging times: reviewing the decade 2004-2014', *Community, Work & Family*, 18 (2), 137-144.
- Kamerman, S. and Moss, P. (Eds.) *The Politics of Parental Leave Policies: Children, Parenting, Gender and the Labour Market*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Moss, P. and Deven, F. (2006) 'Leave policies and research: a cross-national overview', in L Haas and S. Wisendale (Eds.) *Families and Social Policy: National and International Perspectives*, New York / London: The Haworth Press: 255-285.
- Deven, F. (2005a) 'Review of research on leave policies', in F. Deven and P. Moss (Eds.) *Leave Policies and Research: Reviews and Country Notes*. Brussels: CBGS Working Papers 2005/3, 17-28.
- Deven, F. (2005b) 'Assessing the use of parental leave by fathers: Towards a conceptual model', in B. Peper et al. (Eds.) *Flexible Working and Organizational Change: The Integration of Work and Personal Life*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 247-267.

- Deven, F. and Carrette, C. (2005) 'A Review of the Impact on Children of Leave Arrangements for Parents', in: L. Hantrais et al. (Eds.) *European Cross-National Research and Policy (7th Series)*. Loughborough: European Research Centre Cross-National Research Papers, 59-66.
- Deven, F. and Moss, P. (2002) 'Leave arrangements for parents: overview and future look', *Community, Work & Family*, 5 (3), 237-255
- Moss, P. and Deven, F. (1999) (Eds.) *Parental Leave: Progress or Pitfall? Research and Policy Issues In Europe*. The Hague / Brussels: NIDI / CBGS Publications vol. 35.
- Moss, P. and Deven, F. (1999) 'Parental leave in context', in P. Moss and F. Deven (Eds.) *Parental Leave: Progress or Pitfall? Research and Policy Issues In Europe*. The Hague / Brussels: NIDI / CBGS Publications vol. 35, 1-24.